



SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETE LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS (ALPS)

Special Olympics athletes are the leaders of the movement. Through Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs), athletes explore opportunities in roles previously considered "nontraditional." Such participation might come in the form of an athlete serving on the Board of Directors or local organizing committee, or it might find an athlete as a spokesperson, team captain, coach or official. Participation in ALPs may be in addition to or in place of participation in traditional programs.

As an integral component of Special Olympics' dedication to empowerment and dignity, ALPs initiatives provide [new opportunities for athletes](#) and [benefit the movement](#) as a whole. Below are some initiatives that Special Olympics Programs already have instituted. Many may already be occurring in your local Special Olympics Programs.

- Athletes on Program Boards of Directors
- Athletes on Games Management Teams
- Athletes on Games Evaluation Teams
- Global Messenger
- Athlete Congress or Input Councils
- Athletes as Coaches
- Athletes as Officials
- Athletes as Volunteers
- Athletes employed by Special Olympics
- Athletes as contributors to newsletters and Web sites

Special Olympics is committed to breaking down barriers that others thought were permanent. ALPs programming breaks down barriers that keep athletes from fully enjoying Special Olympics by providing self-directed, meaningful participation in virtually any aspect of the Movement.

Sargent Shriver Global Messengers

The Sargent Shriver Global Messengers are leaders who communicate powerful declarations of the hope, acceptance, dignity and courage of Special Olympics athletes around the world. They help spread the message and vision of the Movement as well as the benefits they have gained by participating in Special Olympics.

The concept for the Global Messenger initiative grew out of Special Olympics' year-long 30th anniversary celebration in 1998. That year, 12 athlete spokespeople were selected to help "build the bridge to the next generation of athlete heroes" with appearances at high-profile events throughout the anniversary year. Their efforts met with such enormous success that it was decided to establish a similar program on a more permanent basis. Now, every four years, 12 Sargent Shriver Global Messengers are selected from throughout the world through an extensive nomination process.

The Global Messengers have proven to be the Movement's most effective spokespeople. Through media appearances and speeches to civic and business groups, the Global Messengers carry forth the themes that are most important to athletes in Special Olympics Programs around the world.

For more information about ALPs initiative, please visit the Special Olympics Web site at www.specialolympics.org.